



***United States Attorney
Southern District of New York***

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**U.S. CHARGES COMPANY OWNER WITH ILLEGAL
ASBESTOS REMOVAL FROM MANHATTAN BUILDING**

JAMES B. COMEY, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, announced that an Indictment was unsealed today in Manhattan federal court charging JOHN LOA, the operator of Budget Asbestos Removal Company ("Budget Asbestos"), with illegally removing asbestos from a Manhattan building in 2000, in violation of environmental laws and regulations. The building at which the illegal asbestos removal took place is located at 308 West 30th Street in Manhattan.

The two-count Indictment charges LOA with violating the requirements and prohibitions governing the renovation of certain buildings containing asbestos.

According to the Indictment, in order to obtain a contract to remove asbestos from the building's basement, LOA fraudulently provided the building's owner with a false New York State asbestos handling license purportedly held by Budget

Asbestos. In fact, the Indictment alleges, Budget Asbestos did not have a New York State asbestos handling license.

The Indictment alleges that, in the course of removing asbestos from 308 West 30th Street, LOA violated certain rules, called "work practice standards," that had been established by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (the "EPA") to govern the renovation of certain buildings containing asbestos, a hazardous air pollutant. The Indictment charges that LOA violated the EPA work practice standards by, among other things, failing to provide the EPA with written notice of intention to renovate at least 10 working days before asbestos removal work began and by causing asbestos material to be removed without adequately wetting it.

If convicted, LOA faces a maximum sentence of five years in jail and a fine of \$250,000 fine or twice the gross gain or loss from the offense on each count.

LOA, 43, resides in Florida.

Mr. COMEY praised the efforts of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Criminal Investigation Division of the United States Environmental Protection Agency, which conducted the investigation.

Assistant United States Attorney ANDREW L. FISH is in charge of the prosecution.

The charges contained in the Indictment are merely

accusations, and the defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

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